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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1740
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RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0738
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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0480
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0482
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0334
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0392
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KOLKATA 000327

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SUBJECT: MAOIST INSURGENTS TARGET FORMER JHARKHAND CHIEF MINISTER'S
FAMILY -- KILL 18 PEOPLE

REF: KOLKATA 00074

11. (SBU) Summary: On October 27 in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, Maoist rebels shot and killed eighteen people after a football (soccer) match, including the youngest son of Jharkhand's former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi. The attack occurred in the village of Giridih near the Jharkhand-Bihar border. The GOI and Jharkhand government has responded by ordering the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to launch a "clean-up" operation against Maoists in Jharkhand, as well as in parts of neighboring West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The attack in Jharkhand attack reflects a shift in Maoist tactics in specifically targeting individuals and their families who have taken action against the Maoists -- in addition to the insurgents' general focus on killing law enforcement or government officials. In West Bengal on October 26, one woman was killed in a landmine attack allegedly orchestrated by the Maoists in the West Midnapur district. Jharkhand's government, which has not spent available funds to counter the Maoists, continues to fail in effectively responding to the growing insurgency in the state. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Maoist rebels killed eighteen people, including Anup Marandi, the youngest son of former Chief Minister and leader of the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Democratic) Babulal Marandi. The attack took place after a football match in a village near Giridih, which borders the state of Bihar. The attack occurred around midnight during the post-match prize distribution ceremony. According to media reports, approximately fifteen armed Maoists came to a village in Giridih to look for Anup Marandi's brother, Nanulal Marandi. Nanulal Marandi apparently recognized the danger and managed to escape from the area. According to news reports, the Maoists then opened fire indiscriminately. Eyewitnesses claimed that some of the Maoists were dressed in CRPF uniforms.

13. (SBU) This recent incident indicates the Maoists' new tactic of targeting officials and their families who express opposition or take action against the Maoists. On Sept 7 in Andhra Pradesh, Maoists attempted to kill former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Janardhan Reddy and his wife N. Rajyalakshmi by triggering a landmine under their convoy as it crossed a bridge. The Chief Minister and his wife's vehicle was missed but the following vehicle was hit and three people were killed. The Maoists issued a message saying that they tried killing Reddy because he had banned the Maoists in 1992. On March 4, again in

Jharkhand, Maoists killed Jamshedpur MP Sunil Mahto and three others, when Mahto was participating in a local football match prize distribution ceremony (reftel). Mahato was killed, according to leaflets left by the Maoists, for his efforts to counter the Maoist insurgency in the state.

¶4. (SBU) The response from the Jharkhand government so far has been disorganized. A senior Jharkhand police official told Post that he thought the attackers may have fled to Bihar. When we asked about ongoing efforts made by the State to curb Maoist activity, the official said that out of a total fund of Rs. 20.94 billion (approx. USD 520 million) provided by the Jharkhand Government during the last three fiscal years, the Home Department of the State, which is responsible for security, has spent only Rs. 847.2 million (approx. USD 21.5 million). The remaining funds had been returned without explanation.

¶5. (SBU) Following the attack, the Jharkhand government, along with the GOI, asked the CRPF to launch "Operation Vikram" to "clean-up" the Maoists operating in 18 of Jharkhand's 24 districts. Five companies of paramilitary forces (nearly 600 personnel) are conducting raids in Giridih district and in neighboring Bihar's Jamui district. Police sources told Post that Jharkhand officials are also seeking the help of neighboring states to conduct these operations.

¶6. (SBU) On October 26 in neighboring West Bengal, a woman was killed and another critically injured in the crossfire between Maoists and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in West Bengal's West Midnapore district. The shooting occurred after a landmine blast by the Maoists near Tangbhedra forest in West Midnapore. Although a CRPF jeep narrowly escaped the explosion, a tourist bus passing by sustained damage and then was caught in the crossfire between the Maoists and paramilitary troopers. The district police have arrested three men in connection with

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the blast.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The Maoists clearly have taken a more aggressive approach by targeting those who seek to publicly oppose their growing insurgency in eastern India. The Jharkhand government's weak response to the attack underscores the state's continuing inability to combat the Maoists. It is not a question of money - in fact it appears that funds intended for anti-Maoist activities are going unused. The manner and brazenness of the killing show that Maoists can operate unrestrained in Jharkhand, and that the state has no effective response to the Maoist threat.

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